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PATENT**ABSTRACT**

A shipping seal assembly uses adhesive masking to reduce the magnitude of the pulling force required to pull the pull-strip component of a tear-seal assembly to tear the seal assembly. The very release liner, an ingredient of some adhesive tapes, already removably adhered to the tape as purchased is used to mask the adhesive at the initial tearing and/or final tearing area, or any other location where the magnitude of the pulling force is to be reduced. Precision adhesive masking is accomplished during the same die-cutting process of forming a seal-insert component of the seal assembly, and thus does not require an extra step, but rather uses a die that does both functions of cutting a seal-insert component and kiss-cut-forming an adhesive mask, all in one die-cut step. These seal assembly improvements are implemented in the overall manufacture of a toner hopper, toner cartridge and/or used in an image forming apparatus.